

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 1518**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Eggman**  
**(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Olsen)**  
(Principal coauthor: Senator Galgiani)

January 16, 2014

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An act to amend Section 532 of the Military and Veterans Code, relating to the military.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1518, as introduced, Eggman. Military: National Guard: youth challenge program.

Existing law authorizes the Adjutant General of the California Military Department to establish a military academy to be operated as a charter school or existing alternative education option available under the Education Code, to provide a structured, disciplined environment that is conducive to learning and developing academic skills, leadership, self-esteem, and a strong sense of community. Existing law provides that a new California National Guard Youth Program, except for the California Cadet Corps, may be established as provided by this section only if funds are appropriated for purposes of the new program in the annual Budget Act or any other act.

This bill would, subject to this condition, authorize the Adjutant General, subject to an appropriation for this purpose, to establish a National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program which would provide at least a 22-week residential program and a 12-month post-residential mentoring period to improve life skills and employment potential of participants. The program would accept federal funding, and the Military Department would be required to enter into a memorandum of agreement

with an appropriate school district or county office of education for the purpose of providing educational services. The school district or county office of education would be responsible for ensuring compliance with any applicable requirements imposed pursuant to the Education Code.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: no.  
State-mandated local program: no.

*The people of the State of California do enact as follows:*

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the  
2 following:

3 (a) The National Guard ChalleNGe Program's mission is to  
4 intervene and reclaim the lives of 16- to 18-year old high school  
5 dropouts. ChalleNGe programs across the nation are producing  
6 graduates with the values, life skills, education, and self-discipline  
7 necessary to succeed as productive citizens. ChalleNGe programs  
8 are funded with a 75 percent annual investment by the federal  
9 government and a matching 25 percent investment from the state.  
10 A study by the Rand Corporation determined that the National  
11 Guard's Youth ChalleNGe Program is the most effective program  
12 of its type in the country, with a return on investment of \$2.33 for  
13 every dollar spent.

14 (b) California has two of the most decorated National Guard  
15 Youth ChalleNGe Programs in the country, routinely winning  
16 national awards for effectiveness and achievement. California's  
17 first Youth ChalleNGe program, the Grizzly Youth Academy, was  
18 established in 1998 at Camp San Luis Obispo. The program was  
19 established as a partnership between the California Military  
20 Department and the San Luis Obispo County Office of Education  
21 and operates as a charter public high school. Building on the  
22 success of the Grizzly Youth Academy, California's second Youth  
23 ChalleNGe program, the Sunburst Youth Academy was established  
24 in 2007 at the Joint Forces Training Base at Los Alamitos as a  
25 partnership between the California Military Department and the  
26 Orange County Department of Education and operates as a public  
27 community high school. These academies serve at-risk youth from  
28 southern California and the central coast, a majority of whom come  
29 from predominantly inner city neighborhoods. The two ChalleNGe  
30 programs graduate an average of 800 teens per year.

(c) When a student drops out of high school it is a great personal loss, in terms of missed potential, potential lifetime earnings, and is also a loss for society. A person who has dropped out of high school will earn an average of half as much as their peers who graduated, faces a current joblessness rate of 50 percent, and is three times more likely to serve a prison sentence than they would have had they graduated. The public cost, calculated over the working life of each person who dropped out of high school, is more than \$292,000 in lower tax revenues, higher cash and in-kind transfer costs, and imposed incarceration costs relative to an average high school graduate.

(d) The correlation between high rates of dropout and crime is clearly demonstrated in communities of need. For example, the high school dropout rate in San Joaquin County is 15.4 percent, exceeding the statewide average of 13.1 percent. San Joaquin County also leads the state's other counties in youth and young adult homicides, with a per capita rate nearly three times California's overall rate. This is an enormous and tragic cost in lives, and it is imperative to respond with all effective measures to stanch this loss.

(e) It is the intent of the Legislature to implement a California National Guard ChalleNGe program to serve at-risk teens.

SEC. 2. Section 532 of the Military and Veterans Code is amended to read:

532. (a) ~~The~~ (1) *Subject to subdivision (b), the Adjutant General may enter into a cooperative agreement with the governing board of a school district or a county office of education for the purpose of establishing, pursuant to existing statutory authority in the Education Code, a military academy to be operated as a charter school, pursuant to Part 26.8 (commencing with Section 47600) of Division 4 of Title 2 of the Education Code, or as one of the existing alternative education options, available under the Education Code. The program would provide a structured, disciplined environment that would be conducive to learning in a college preparatory environment. In additional addition to academic skills, students would develop leadership, self-esteem, and a strong sense of community. An academy established pursuant to this section shall comply with the Education Code.*

(2) *Pursuant to Section 509 of Title 32 of the United States Code and subject to subdivision (b), the Adjutant General shall*

1 *conduct a civilian youth opportunities program, to be known as*  
2 *the “National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program,” which shall*  
3 *consist of at least a 22-week residential program and a 12-month*  
4 *post-residential mentoring period. The program shall serve at risk*  
5 *teens in areas of the state, including, but not limited to, the San*  
6 *Joaquin Valley and Northern California, and shall be subject to*  
7 *all of the following:*

8 *(A) The program shall seek to improve life skills and employment*  
9 *potential of participants by providing military-based leadership*  
10 *development, promoting fellowship and community service,*  
11 *developing life-coping skills and job skills, improving physical*  
12 *fitness, providing health and hygiene training, and assisting*  
13 *participants to receive a high school diploma or its equivalent.*

14 *(B) The Adjutant General may accept federal funding to*  
15 *implement a National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program. The*  
16 *Adjutant General may appoint a director and other service*  
17 *members and employees, permanent or temporary, to operate the*  
18 *program.*

19 *(C) The Military Department shall enter into a memorandum*  
20 *of agreement with an appropriate school district or a county office*  
21 *of education for the purpose of providing educational services for*  
22 *students enrolled in a National Guard Youth ChalleNGe Program.*  
23 *The school district or county office of education with which the*  
24 *department contracts shall be responsible for ensuring compliance*  
25 *with any applicable requirements imposed by the Education Code.*

26 *(b) A new ~~California National Guard Youth Program~~ program,*  
27 *except for the California Cadet Corps, may only be established as*  
28 *provided by this section in subdivision (a) if funds are appropriated*  
29 *for purposes of the new program in the annual Budget Act or any*  
30 *other act.*